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Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV, EG, IS, US, XF
SUBJECT: BEGIN'S STATEMENT ON SETTLEMENTS AND AGENDA FOR JERUSALEM MEETING

REF: A) STATE 06680, B) TEL AVIV 0391, C) TEL AVIV 0479

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH BEGIN LAST NIGHT, JANUARY 11, I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTION IN REF A. I TOLD BEGIN THAT WE WERE CLARIFYING TO THE EGYPTIANS FACT THAT HIS STATEMENT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE HERUT CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONCERNING "SUPPORT BY THE U.S." FOR THE ISRAELI POSITION ON SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI IS NOT RPT NOT CORRECT. TOLD HIM THAT AMBASSADOR EILTS HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE EGYPTIANS WHEN HE GAVE THEM THE TEXT OF BEGIN'S SPEECH THAT THIS PARTICULAR PHRASE WAS INCORRECT SINCE WE HAVE NOT ENDORSED THIS OR ANY OTHER PART OF BEGIN'S PROPOSALS, AND HAVE ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS EXPRESSED USG DISAPPROVAL OF AND OPPOSITION TO ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

2. BEGIN WAS CLEARLY TAKEN ABACK BY THIS STATEMENT AND ARGUED WITH ME AT SOME LENGTH THAT IT WAS INCORRECT. HE SAID THAT AS I WELL KNEW HE HAD NEVER USED THE
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TERM "THE U.S. HAS ENDORSED OUR PROPOSALS," THOUGH HE HAD ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS HAD FOUND THEM GENERALLY ENCOURAGING AND A FAIR BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION. BUT, HE SAID, WITH RESPECT TO THAT PART OF OUR PROPOSAL WHICH DEALS WITH LEAVING THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI UNDER THE PROTECTION OF SOME IDF DEFENSE CONTINGENTS, YOUR

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PRESIDENT WAS ENCOURAGING IN HIS COMMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT HE FOUND OUR PROPOSAL FAIR AND "MOST REASONABLE." HE IMMEDIATELY ASKED EVRON TO RESEARCH THE RECORD OF THE WHITE HOUSE MEETINGS AND TO PROVIDE WE WITH EXCERPTS OF THE RECORD TO SUPPORT HIS POINT.

3. BEGIN SAID WHILE IT IS TRUE WE DID NOT ENDORSE HIS PROPOSAL, "IT IS NOT FAIR TO SAY WE DIDN'T ENDORSE IT." "THERE WAS SUPPORT FOR THIS PARTICULAR PART OF MY PEACE PROPOSALS." HE ASKED ME TO PLEASE CLARIFY THE RECORD WITH WASHINGTON AND CAIRO IMMEDIATELY.

4. THIS MORNING (JANUARY 12) EVRON CALLED TO GIVE ME THE RESULTS OF HIS RESEARCH. THE ISRAELI RECORD OF THE MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE AT THE WHITE HOUSE ON DECEMBER 16 QUOTES BEGIN AS HAVING SAID "IN THE NORTH WE HAVE THE PROBLEM OF THE AREA BETWEEN RAFAH AND EL-ARISH. THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ARE THERE (POINTING AT THE MAP). WE SUGGEST THEY STAY. WE WILL ALSO HAVE THERE UN FORCES AND THERE SHOULD ALSO BE INCLUDED A SMALL ISRAELI DEFENSE CONTINGENT. THIS IS THE OUTLINE OF WHAT WE DECIDED TO DO TO ESTABLISH PEACE WITH EGYPT. IT IS A GREAT CHANGE, AND FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW A GREAT RISK." THE ISRAELI RECORD GOES ON THEN TO QUOTE THE PRESIDENT, "I WISH FIRST TO SAY THAT IN MY OPINION THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS PROPOSAL

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THAT SADAT COULD NOT ACCEPT. IT IS VERY REASONABLE. THE TIME SCHEDULE SHOULD BE EXPEDITED."

5. THE ISRAELI RECORD ALSO QUOTES THE PRESIDENT AT THE SECOND WHITE HOUSE MEETING ON DECEMBER 17 AS SAYING, "WHAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT IS THAT THE PUBLIC REACTION TO YOUR PROPOSAL ON JUDEA, SAMARIA AND GAZA WILL NOT PROVE HARMFUL TO SADAT. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SINAI PROPOSAL WILL BE WELL RECEIVED BY HIM."

6. I IMMEDIATELY ARGUED WITH EVRON THAT THESE QUOTATIONS COULD HARDLY BE READ AS AN ENDORSEMENT; RATHER THEY WERE AN EXPRESSION OF THE PRESIDENT'S ASSESSMENT AT THAT TIME ABOUT WHAT SADAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT, AN ASSESSMENT WHICH COULD WELL HAVE CHANGED IN LIGHT OF SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS. EVRON INSISTED THAT BEGIN HAD EVERY REASON TO INTERPRET THESE STATEMENTS AS APPROVING HIS PROPOSAL FOR SETTLEMENTS TO REMAIN IN THE RAFAH AREA, ALONG WITH A SMALL ISRAELI DEFENSE CONTINGENT.

7. LATER TODAY (JANUARY 12) EVRON TELEPHONED AGAIN TO

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SAY THAT HE HAD TALKED TO BEGIN FURTHER IN THE COURSE
OF THE DAY AND BEGIN WISHED TO REEMPHASIZE AS STRONGLY
AS POSSIBLE TO ME AND THROUGH ME TO WASHINGTON THAT HE
BELIEVED QUITE HONESTLY HE HAD HAD U.S. GOVERNMENT
SUPPORT FOR RETAINING SETTLEMENTS IN THE RAFAH AREA
WITH SOME ISRAELI DEFENSE CONTINGENT TO PROTECT THEM.
THEREFORE, HE REMAINS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE DISAVOWAL
MESSAGE WE PASSED TO THE EGYPTIANS (REF A).

8. NEW BUT RELATED SUBJECT. BEGIN ASKED EVERON TO
MAKE CLEAR TO ME TODAY THAT HE WAS NOT UNDULY EXERCISED
ABOUT OUR HAVING SHOWN OUR AGENDA PROPOSALS TO SADAT
BEFORE I DISCUSSED THEM WITH HIM (REF C, PARA
THREE). HE DOES NOT WISH TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THIS
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AFTER THINKING FURTHER ABOUT IT, SINCE DINITZ HAD
DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT IN GENERAL WITH THE SECRETARY
EARLIER AND HE NOW UNDERSTANDS MORE CLEARLY WHY WE
FELT THE TIME PRESSURES REQUIRED US TO GO AHEAD
QUICKLY TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE.

9. DEPT MAY WISH PASS THIS MESSAGE TO AMBASSADOR
EILTS IN CAIRO.
LEWIS

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